

**STAFF SERGEANT KATTERI FRANKLIN**

As a female military police officer, US Army Staff Sergeant Katteri Franklin had a much different experience than her fellow male Soldiers while serving in Iraq.

"The Iraqi women would stare at me and I would ask them what they were looking at," reflected Franklin. "Their response would be that they had never seen a woman in uniform before."

Despite their initial curiosity and sometimes shock, the Iraqi women learned to trust Franklin and consider her an ally. She was able to use her gender to her advantage by helping them be more comfortable around U.S. servicemembers.

"The Iraqi women would seek me out when they needed medical or aid supplies," said Franklin. "They felt more comfortable around me."

Due to Franklin's willingness to interact closely with the Iraqi civilians, she became a critical part of ensuring that the local women and children had access to aid and medical treatment during her mission. Franklin's service in Iraq earned her a Bronze Star.

"I think it was easier for them to talk to me because I was a female," said Franklin, who was one of 22 female Soldiers in her Company and one of five in the Platoon.

In addition to building relationships with the women civilians, Franklin was a team leader in training the Iraqi police. She led up to 11 U.S. Soldiers at a time when they would go outside the wire to the Iraqi police stations and teach security measures.

"I learned a lot about the Iraqi people that I didn't know before," reflected Franklin. "I also learned a lot about my Soldiers. They managed to do things I never thought they could before we left (the U.S.). It was humbling to lead such fine Soldiers."

Franklin and her Soldiers worked closely with interpreters to communicate with the Iraqi police and their families. One accomplishment that she is most proud of from her service in Iraq is the progress she could see through the Iraqi police.

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After two deployments, one to Iraq, Franklin is currently finishing U.S. Army recruitment school in the U.S. She hopes to become an Army recruiter and eventually go to officer training school. She wants to lead Soldiers for the remainder of her career – even though Franklin herself only joined the Army because she passed Basic Training.

"As a female recruiter, I hope to let people see a different side of the Army that they are not used to seeing," said Franklin. "Maybe then they will know that it's great to be a female in the Army."